



# CHEESE BITS

**W3CCX**  
**CLUB MEMORIAL CALL**

ARRL  
Affiliated  
Club



**Volume XLIX**

**August 2008**

**Number 8**

## PREZ SEZ:

If there's one event that everyone seems to try make on-time, it's the Annual PackRat White Elephant Auction. For the past dozen years or more, Gary has hosted the event, and we are grateful for his hospitality and the many donations of gear to the auction. The weather was extremely cooperative, and with the superb auctioneering skills of K3JJZ, we managed to clear everything out in less than 2-1/2 hours. If you were looking for coax cable, superflex and hardline, this was a fantastic buying opportunity—with connectors to boot. And envy W3ICC who walked away with almost 3KW of amps for under \$100—and that included the HV power supply. Our guests also had an opportunity to increase their VHF arsenals with rigs and antennas, and plenty of small construction items. This year we had 5 "White Elephants" that were donated by several club members and 1 guest. Everyone had fun guessing the contents by size and weight, but only the bidding winners got to see the results. By my count, 90 items were auctioned, and there were at least 25 different buyers. We all seemed to go home satisfied with what we sold and bought. Thanks again to all those who made donations for the event.

Our annual picnic will be history also by the time this hits the streets; I'm looking forward to a nice relaxing afternoon in the country and sharing some chat and chow with good friends. Again, thanks to Al & Carole Sheppard for hosting.

Our newly elected board had their first meeting prior to the auction, and newcomers received their officer's manuals, with hard copies of many of the official club papers and club history and records of previous officers. All of the PackRat

official publications are archived in electronic format, and if you are a member and seeking a copy of the club constitution, the club history, roster, phone and officer records, drop me an email. The board is tasked with managing the business of the club, the annual calendar of events, and fiscal responsibility. We are seeking a membership chairperson to be the contact person for newcomers and keeping them engaged in VHF and introduced to the members and club activities. Is this something we can count on you for?

The MID-ATLANTIC STATES VHF CONFERENCE AND HAMARAMA NEED YOUR SUPPORT AND ATTENDANCE. The committee has been working to arrange a great day of educational and entertaining speakers, good eats, affordable price and hospitality. Please register from the [www.packratvhf.com](http://www.packratvhf.com) site by following the VHF Conference links.

I'm off to the EME Conference in Florence, Italy with Jani in August. K1JT, N2UO and K2UYH will also be there, and each of them are making presentations at the conference. If you want to see the website of a well managed international conference, put EME 2008 in your search engine and scan the website. We all hope to come home with new insights, and the XYLS with new purchases from the Italian shops.

Our newly elected VP, K3TUF is assembling a great meeting program line-up, including a hands-on tune-up evening, and your attendance will be welcomed at each and every meeting of our "indoor season" starting in September. For those who have wanted a small antenna building project, we may have all the parts ready in the early fall. I look forward to your increased participation in all of our club activities and hearing you on-the-air. 73, Rick, K1DS

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222.98/224.58 MHz (PL 131.8) Hatfield, PA

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 HAMARAMA: WA3DRC  
 VHF Conference: W2PED pdrexler@hotmail.com  
 Awards Chairman KB3GJT  
 Quartermaster: K3IUV bsoltoff@comcast.net

**PACKRAT BEACONS - W3CCX/B**

FM29jw Philadelphia, PA  
 50.080 144.284 222.064 432.286 903.072 1296.245 MHz  
 2304.043 3456.207 5763.196 10,368.062 MHz (as of 1/08)

**MONDAY NIGHT NETS**

TIME	FREQUENCY	NET CONTROL
7:30 PM	50.145 MHz	K3EOD FM29II
8:00 PM	144.150 MHz	N3ITT FN20KI
8:30 PM	222.125 MHz	K3TUF FN10we
8:30 PM	224.58R MHz	W3GXB FN20jm
9:00 PM	432.110 MHz	WA3EHD FN20kd
9:30 PM	1296.100 MHz	K3TUF FN10we
10:00 PM	903.125 MHz	W2SJ FM29LW

Visit the Mt Airy VHF Radio Club at: [www.packratvhf.com](http://www.packratvhf.com) or  
[www.w3ccx.com](http://www.w3ccx.com)

## Editor's Column

**Next Meeting: September 18, 2008** At our usual site: the Ben Wilson Senior Center, 580 Delmont Av, Warminster PA. Our own **Paul Drexler, W2PED** has an exciting presentation on his work in creating an off the shelf 24 GHz transverter. With some luck, we'll have technical details to publish on this in our September issue.

**Greetings Packrats!** As has become customary, our "August" meeting was held in July at Al & Carole Sheppard's backyard and pool. If traffic on our mailing list is any indication it was a fun and relaxing day at Al's. I'm sure those of us who didn't attend will hear more about it at the September meeting!

Last month I asked our readers to think about writing an article for Cheese Bits and I promised to give you some ideas for topics. We heartily welcome your contributions. So here-with are just a few ideas:

**Technical:**

- Antenna construction
- Antenna mounting / lining up
- Rotator maintenance and repair
- Sequencing station equipment
- Band sequencing
- Amplifier installation
- Power supply cooling / metering
- Commercial / surplus equipment conversion
- Setting up and using a 10 MHz disciplined signal source

**Operating:**

- Tips & strategy for contest ops
- Tips & strategy for rover ops
- Finding and using propagation enhancement
- Routine and contest usage of WSJT and PSK
- IF filter selection / Compression level selection

This just scratches the surface. The best article you can write is on a subject **you're** interested in! Please share your experience and knowledge with your fellow 'Rats!

'Till next month 73, Lenny W2BVH

## More Pictures from the Packrats ARRL June VHF QSO Party at Camelback

There simply wasn't enough room last month to include all the pictures worth showing! Here are a few more.



Talking to park ranger while lightning clears the area



The whole W3CCX antenna farm



Microwave crew lining up another Q



222 antenna on a beautifully engineered trailer tower



Logging another 432 QSO



Teardown crew after unloading at Bob's

## June Meeting at Otto's Brauhaus



Dinner, election of officers, ...



...post contest celebration, and ...



... a great evening for everyone!

## Breaking news on the June Contest:

ARRL Reported scores. Top 5 Multi-ops

Club / Call	Score
W2SZ	1,941,840
K8GP	1,505,898
K5QE	1,184,688
<b>W3CCX</b>	927,165
K3YTL	507,872

We should all be VERY PROUD of the results from our more "Layed Back Operation" this year. We all had fun and we were all set up well in advance of the contest start for the first time in I can't remember when. WAY TO GO PACKRATS! **73, Bill K3EGE**

## Working W3CCX as a Rover ... Another View - by John W3HMS/ R

W3HMS presents personal experience working W3CCX: A bit of criticism, a bit of praise and some food for thought.

Perhaps you have wondered what it is like to be a Rover station working the Packrats? My partner Joe, WA3PTV, and I are often in one of 4 grids, i.e. FN10, FM19, FM09 or FN00 which is a good distance for microwaves. In each contest where we all participate, we want to work W3CCX but often do not.

We often establish contact on 6m or 2m and are happy to do so. Moving above that is frequently frustrating with failure because if there is no success on the next band there is no fall-back position to regroup and try again or move to another band.

It has often seemed that the operators on the bottom bands did not understand roving for if we called back to try and re-establish communications, we felt like Martians trying to talk to earthlings without a common language. This caused language not like our mothers taught us to ensue, HI!!

In past years, I have often set skeds before hand with Rover coordinators only to see the skeds fall apart in contest execution with no way to contact the coordinator(s). Then I discovered that the promised liaison rig and frequency was not available or, at best, not known by the bottom operators. This gave poor or no results and much frustration.

Now, I always like to be positive. It is thus a pleasure to note that the June 2008 VHF Contest was a vast improvement, as I see it, in the Packrats liaison process. First, it seemed that each "bottom four" operator was more knowledgeable about working Rovers and there was for the first time a liaison frequency in the 1296 MHz band. This gave both Joe and me more QSOs on more bands with the Packrats than before and indeed more bands above 222 MHz. Now I personally would prefer to see the microwave liaison operator on 222 MHz in FM or SSB but 1296 is a vast improvement over past contests. I believe the credit goes to Bill, K3EGE for the sked setting and coordination before the contest and to Rick, K1DS during the contest. In saying this I may well have

omitted some ladies and gentlemen who should be cited for fine work.

My rover station should be defined a bit. I would like to say that I have a Rolls-Royce limo driven by a chauffer who is a gourmet cook with a 100 ft crank up electric-winch driven tower and antennas with no less than 30 db of gain. The meals are superb as is the air conditioning. Alas reality is a Chevy 2004 van which is also the family chariot. To it we add 8 large batteries, 6 antennas on a rotatable roof mast, and bands 6m-10 GHz with 24 es 47 GHz available. The air conditioning is open windows with bugs and the gourmet meals are sandwiches et al in an ice chest. Roving is hard work and costly, with, gas being second to motel costs. Still, roving is rewarding with the surprise DX contact and the friendly QSOs on any band being the reward we all seek.

Thus you can see that cooperative operators are the key to making that DX possible and that suboptimal operators will send the rover to another hobby!!!

I do dream of working W3CCX on 6m through 10 GHz ... the bands Joe and I both use, during each contest. I believe the practice of 1296 liaison used this June will go a long way towards making it happen.

73, John W3HMS/ R



## Silent Key

Ron, formerly WB3JKS passed away. Lots of hams owe their towers to him and me, he was never a contest guy, but a man who held the ropes (literally) to help anyone. A great loss to the ham community, even though many people don't know who he was. And it was always for free. I know a lot of guys will remember him. He was the true spirit of ham radio, always behind the scenes. 73's, Danno

- reported by K1DS

## Smithsonian Institute Station Going QRT after 32 years on the Air

As reported by ARRL: "After more than 30 years on the air from the nation's capital, the Amateur Radio station at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, NN3SI, will become silent on Thursday, July 31. Originally located in the Nations of Nations exhibit, the station first went on-the-air in 1976 in celebration of the US Bicentennial. "

## Ham URL of the month

For those who are unaware of it, it's well worth your while to check out <http://www.ac6v.com/>. This site is basically an index of other web pages (thousands of them). It's well organized and easy to use. A perfect place to start looking for the answer to any ham radio related question.

## HAMARAMA!

### 37th Annual Packrat Flea Market

Sunday

September 28th 2008

Middletown Grange Fair Grounds

Penns Park Road,  
Wrightstown, PA

General Admission \$6 — XYL /  
Harmonics under 13 free

Outdoor sellers \$10 per car extra

Indoor sellers \$15 extra for each  
10 foot table – 120 spaces available  
on a first come first served  
basis

For details see

<http://>

[www.packratvhf.com/  
Hamarama/hamarama.html](http://www.packratvhf.com/Hamarama/hamarama.html)

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# Mid-Atlantic States VHF Conference

**Saturday, September 27**

Aetna Bldg 2 Auditorium  
1425 Union Meeting Road  
Blue Bell, PA  
Between Jolly Rd and Harvest Drive.

## **Preliminary Program:**

Digital Station Enhancements - presented by K3TUF  
What's new for 24 GHz - presented by W2PED  
Getting Started on EME - presented by K1DS  
A Backpack Portable Station - presented by ND3F  
Software Defined Radio Advancements - presented by N4HY  
Portable EME - presented by K2UYH  
.... and more to come

In addition, a beginner's session in the afternoon will include gear selection, test equipment, beacons, operating modes, antennas, feedlines, microwave operating, contesting.

Papers and presentations still are being solicited through August 15<sup>th</sup>. Presentation topics include VHF, UHF and microwave construction, operating, digital modes, EME, antennas, roving and more. Send yours to the program chair Paul Drexler W2PED  
[pdrexler@hotmail.com](mailto:pdrexler@hotmail.com) MSWord format preferred

**Early Bird Special Combo** includes Friday night Hospitality, Conference, snacks, Sat Lunch, Triple Choice Buffet Saturday evening, CD proceedings, & ticket to HAMARAMA, the Annual Packrat Hamfest & flea market on Sun Sept 28. **Rate through September 5, 2008 - \$75.00 after that date \$80**

## **A la carte Registration as follows:**

**Conference Registration ONLY** includes snacks & lunch - **\$45.00**

**Triple Choice Buffet Dinner ONLY** - **\$35.00**

**Special Beginner's afternoon session ONLY** with lunch - **\$25.00**

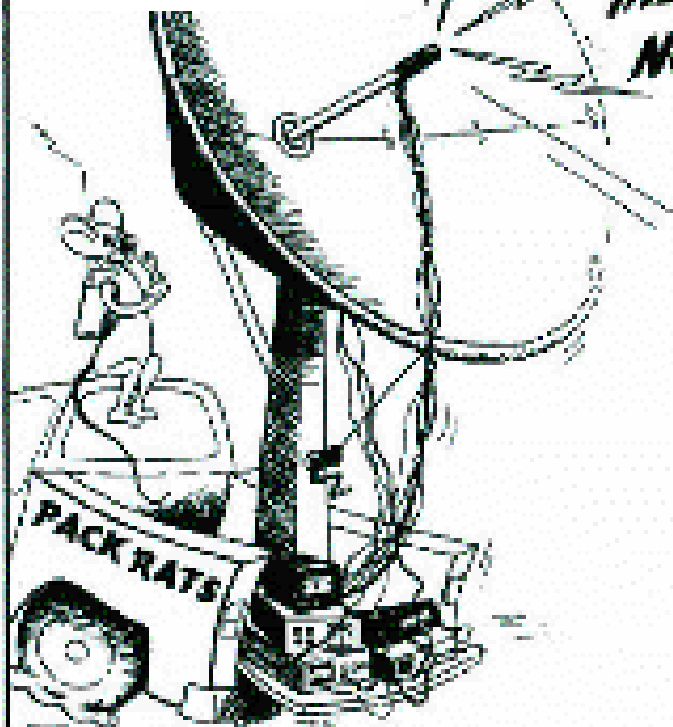
## **Questions? Contact Conference Committee:**

**Michael Davis, KB1JEY, kb1jey@arrl.net**  
**Jim Antonacci, WA3FHD, jjantonacci@verizon.net**  
**Rick Rosen, K1DS, rick1ds@hotmail.com**

**Register at [www.packratvhf.com](http://www.packratvhf.com) choose VHF conference link. This link also provides driving directions to the accommodations, hospitality and presentation venues**

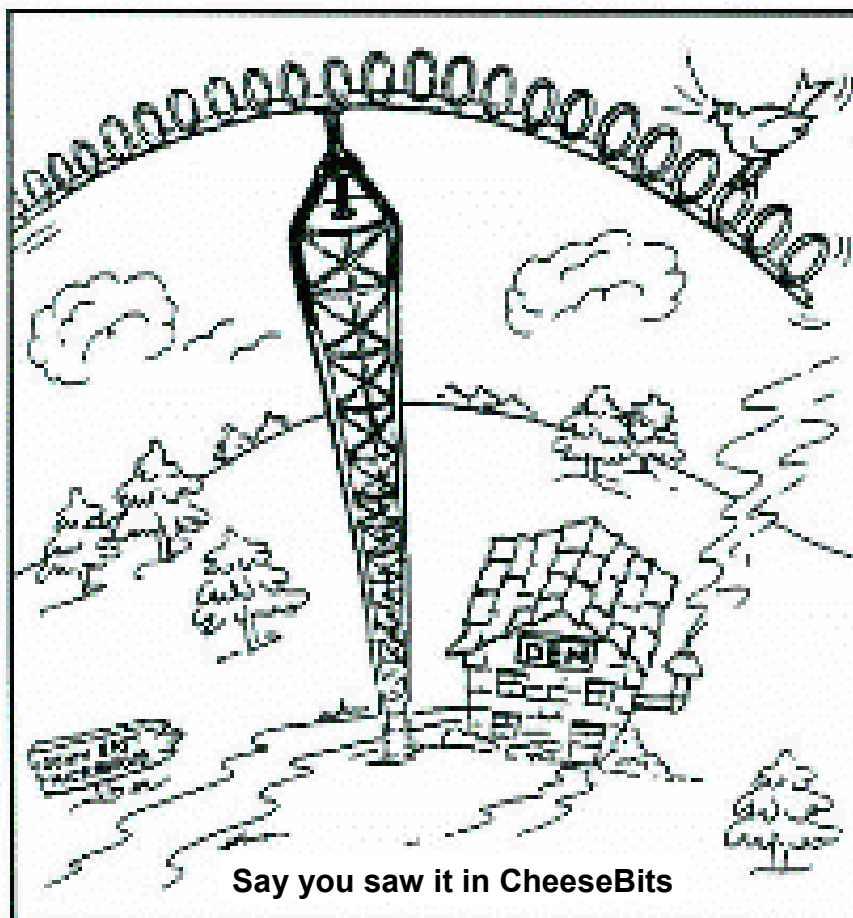
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